

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, and 4-20 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

SPECIFICATION

Paragraph [0021] of the specification has been amended to recite that the inward edge portion or inside edge 9 may deviate from a radial normal direction by up to a maximum of 30°, when not mating the sealing surface 25. This subject matter was previously found in claim 3 as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 8-11, 13, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by DE 1893773. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the inward end portion of the sleeve deviates from a radial normal direction by up to a maximum of 30°, when not axially mating the second sealing surface. This subject matter was previously found in dependent claim 3, which was indicated as being allowable by the Examiner. Because independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3, Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim are now in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection, therefore, are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 1893773 in view of Tellier (U.S. Pat. No. 4,998,740). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6 and 7 depend from claim 1, addressed above. As stated above, claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3. As such, claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim should now be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection, therefore, are respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Independent claims 17 - 20 are allowed. The Examiner states that claims 3, 5, 12, 15, and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As stated above, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable claim 3. Therefore, claims 1, 2, and 4-16 should now also be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt

and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 23, 2005

By: _____


Philip E. Rettig, Reg. No. 34,000

Jason A. Heist, Reg. No. 51,797

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

PER/JAH